The Magkaisa Filipino Club at Fresno State participated in the annual Friendship Games hosted by California State University, Fullerton, on Oct. 22 after it was canceled the previous year due to the COVID-19.

About 50 members participated in the event along with many different Filipino college organizations from across California.

Friendship Games is a series of competitive field games, choreographed dances and creative themes titled S.P.U.Fs that promotes spirit, pride, unity and friendship, hence the acronym. S.P.U.Fs are chants each school has that relate to their theme and school.

For example, this year Fresno State went as Animal Crossing, an iconic Nintendo game series that focuses on the concept of friendship.

Rowen Herrera, club president and a third-year kinesiology major, shared his thoughts about his first year leading the club and also participating in Friendship Games.

“The S.P.U.Fs were my favorite aspect of Friendship Games 2022. I had a lot of fun with the team.”

By Katie Xiong
Reporter

Eating Disorder Survival: A True Story

By Jennifer Ramírez
Editor-in-Chief

Isabella De La Torre contributed to this story.

Numbers. Rituals involving numbers. Worth measured in numbers. Calories, weight, macros, fat grams, miles on the treadmill, clothing size, etc. It’s all about staying within the “safe” parameters of numbers and rigid routines.

I know all too well about this. I am 48, and have had two bouts with anorexia in my life. The most recent struggle followed the implosion of my last relationship. Domestic violence, divorce and a custody battle led to a downward spiral of starvation that lasted three years. Much like the first instance, which occurred when I was 16, I turned to starvation to numb myself. My home life was tumultuous and I comforted myself in the rituals of anorexia.

People who suffer from eating disorders are often trying to make sense amidst chaos. It is sometimes assumed that eating disorders are just about self-image, but the problem is bigger than that. Weight loss is merely a byproduct of the ways in which the sufferer tries to control food and, in essence, life spinning out of control. It is oddly comforting for an anorexic or bulimic person to stay within “safe” caloric limits, weight ranges, binge/purge cycles, clothing sizes, routines, etc. Staying thin provides the sufferer not only a feeling of self-worth, but a reassurance that something in life can be controlled. In fact, the illusion of control is what makes the disease addictive and dangerous.

More people die from anorexia nervosa than any other psychiatric illness, according to The

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Isabella De La Torre contributed to this story.
By Jennifer Ramirez
Editor-in-Chief

His life story reads like a Hollywood script. Khetphet Phagnasay, known as KP, escaped Laos with his family in 1979 when he was six years old, lived in a number of refugee camps, then settled in the United States where he chased his dreams of becoming an actor after watching Hollywood films on his journey to America.

KP recently appeared in the Netflix series “Dahmer,” where he plays the father of two of Jeffrey Dahmer’s victims.

He is often recognized when he’s out in public, which he appreciates because his success was hard won.

“I understood the system and did not let the system use me,” KP said.

He learned to navigate the choppy waters of the film industry, just as his family had once navigated a way out of Laos. He remembers the day they left.

“I was fishing and my uncle told me ‘get home right now, your dad wants to see you!’ I dropped my fishing pole, I didn’t say goodbye to my friends,” he said.

“I got on the back of my uncle’s motorcycle and went home.”

When he got there, he feared something tragic had happened because everything was in flux. His mother had already left with his younger sister, his dad was about to leave with his uncle and younger brother, leaving KP and his older sister behind with instructions to catch a bus into the city, where his aunt and uncle lived. He was instructed to remain quiet.

“We got to the house and we had a family member gathering and it was very quiet. You know, so you, like, feel the energy shift, and dad explained everything that was happening,” KP said.

He said that there was a lot of nervous tension, and family members were leaving in small groups to avoid suspicion by the armed Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese military forces.

“My dad had paid a smuggler. He and his older sister behind with instructions to catch a bus into the city, where his aunt and uncle lived. He was instructed to remain quiet.

“He saw his name on the list. He had to plan out everything that he was doing, ready to go over well with the parents of the bullies, who sometimes confronted KP’s father.

Even though there was a lot of change going on, his family spoke Lao at home to remain tied to their cultural roots. Outside of the home, the family spoke English as best they could.

They wanted to assimilate while also preserving their culture. They watched “Sesame Street” and “Electric Company” so that they could learn English faster.

He arrived in the U.S. in July of 1980. He remembers crossing the Bay Bridge into San Francisco on a bus. After living with his family in San Francisco, they then moved to Chicago. His formative years were spent in the Midwest.

While in Chicago, many of his family did not speak English. He only knew “yes, no and absent.” At school, and in the neighborhood, he was bullied.

Sadly, his self-preservation instincts did not go over well with the parents of the bullies, who sometimes confronted KP’s father.

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He remembers a teacher named Betty who tutored his parents. She taught them living skills and language acquisition.

After Chicago, his family moved to Hawaii. He fit in from the start at his new school, excelling academically. He played sports and had an interest in acting, but said the schools were not very good.

His father then decided to move to Clovis. KP transferred to Clovis High School his sophomore year, where he continued to do theater and sports. He also developed an impressive work ethic.

“I didn’t just want to be on a team, I also had to work hard to be able to play,” he said.

That drive is what eventually led to success in Hollywood.

“I know I’m an underdog, but I’m hungry. I’m going to work hard,” KP said.

He may have appeared quiet on the surface, but growing up in poverty and moving around a lot gave him the hardiness and adaptability required to break into Hollywood.

He attended Fresno State earning a bachelor’s degree theater arts, then continued his education graduating with a Master of Fine Arts in Acting from the University of Hawaii.

His perseverance made him try harder. Whenever he was turned down for a role, he would write his own material.

“I like writing stories that matter,” he said.

He also knew how to play the game to get the kinds of roles he wanted.

In addition to pursuing his own acting career, he directs, produces, does stunt work and runs his own talent agency located in the Central Valley called KPSTUDIOS (www.kpstudios.com), where he aims to represent and coach actors who might not get a chance otherwise.
EATING DISORDERS
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Eating Disorders Coalition. In fact, it is estimated that someone dies as a direct result of an eating disorder every 52 minutes. And despite its association with young middle-class women, the problem affects people from every swath of life. Men and women of every race and age group are affected.

According to a 2013 survey by the National Eating Disorder Association approximately 10% to 20% of women and 4% to 10% of men in college suffer from an eating disorder.

Additionally, transgender college students are four times more likely to suffer from eating disorders, according to the Emily Program, a nationally recognized eating disorder awareness, treatment, and lifetime recovery program based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

With a new era of technology, we now have seamless access to information and have a variety of tools at our fingertips.

We have the ability to check in on long lost friends, and give an update on our lives through social media. These platforms have become prevalent among young adults, especially.

Although social media yields a positive experience for most, it has become a major factor in the rise of eating disorders and other mental illnesses.

The University of Nevada discovered that one in six students experiences abusive social media behavior online.

About 20% of people who have at least one social media account agreed that they had to check in to their accounts every three hours to avoid anxious feelings.

Teens and young adults are now using platforms such as TikTok and Instagram as a coping mechanism for problems they may experience in their lives, the report said.

Dangerous trends concerning body image are now being seen across these platforms.

In 2021, problematic hashtags such as #skinnycheck were circulating on TikTok. Topics of weight loss, which are seemingly innocent, encourage teens to limit their calorie intake. This results in dangerous practices that can result in eating disorders.

TikTok in particular has 1 billion active users between the ages of 16 and 24, and young people are the most affected by these trends, according to a story published by The Guardian on the reach of pro-eating disorder videos on teens.

College students are also reported to have seen an increase in eating disorders. In 2008 22% of students followed weight loss diets, compared to 4.2% in 1995.

The reason eating disorders are prevalent in college students can be found in social and psychological factors, such as being in a new environment, with new routines and pressures, an abundance of food choices, and the freedom to experiment with unhealthy vices to deal with academic pressures, according to a study by Regis College.

Some behaviors associated with eating disorders are restrictive food intake, not eating around other people, over-exercising, obsession with weight and body size, anxiety about eating, and a tendency toward perfectionism.

If anyone you know is struggling, or if you are struggling with an eating disorder, it is imperative that you seek help. Fortunately, there is help on campus.

Fresno State Counseling and Psychological Services can be reached at (559) 278-2734. Students can receive counseling, crisis intervention and psychiatry services.

You can also go to Let’s Talk, which is a free, anonymous mental health service.

It is located on campus in the Kremen Education Building, Room 334 and Industrial Technology Room 242.

For more information, visit fresnostate.edu/health/counseling.

Even if it seems daunting or scary, I urge anyone dealing with an eating disorder to reach out for help. I eventually got better.

Twice, in fact. I no longer have to live in a mental prison of obsessive restriction and dependence on “safe” numbers and routines. I am no longer limiting my experiences, and I don’t care what a scale says. In fact, I don’t own one anymore and it feels amazing.

Breaking free of an eating disorder can be done, but in most cases professional help is required.

I succeeded because my counselor provided me with the tools necessary to navigate my way back to health. Numbers don’t measure my worth anymore.

I have found that the effort I put into my life, and the love I give others is a far better barometer.
Ah, fall! It’s that wonderful time of year when we can cuddle under blankets, enjoy pumpkin spice...everything and enjoy the cooler weather. I, for one, love the rain and the anticipation of a much needed winter break.

As you may be aware, October was Filipino American Heritage Month, and my family made a wide variety of traditional Filipino dishes.

My daughter helped me make lumpia, which was hilarious given our inexperience. Our version looked less like lumpia and more like chimichangas because we overstuffed them. Fortunately, some of our culinary endeavors were successful.

We made delicious pancit, which involves lots of noodles and meat. Yum!

We also made suman, which is a sweet rice dessert wrapped in banana leaves. Needless to say, our house smelled great all month.

We were also able to catch some awesome television shows when we had a moment to relax.

We watched “The Fabulous Filipino Brothers,” which is a romantic comedy now streaming on Hulu. We also watched “Dahmer” on Netflix, which features my high school friend Khetpet Phagnasay (KP). I wrote a feature article about him for this issue.

On a more serious note, I also wrote about eating disorders because they are scary and pervasive.

I want everyone to be happy, healthy and safe. Please nourish your bodies and souls, and if you need help, reach out to friends, family or find assistance on campus (it is widely available). I know this time of the year can be overwhelming, but no person is ever truly alone.

On that note, I’m going to attempt to cor-

OPINION: Electric Scooter Revolution

By Valentino Di Pietro Hernandez
Reporter

This fall semester, there has been a drastic increase in the use of electric scooters and other electric vehicles such as skateboards and bikes on campus. There are a variety of reasons for it, but first I must make clear what this article will and won’t cover.

I will say upfront that my interviews and research into electric scooters (not skateboards or bikes) is limited and unprofessional.

I interviewed about 30 students — some with some without scooters — to get a general idea on how students feel about them.

I understood from the very beginning that this article would either be a months long dedicated research to data collecting if I wanted to get an accurate picture on the situation, but this is a newspaper article, not a research paper.

Thus, I hope you keep the “vagueness” of things I say here in mind as you read along. Thank you for your understanding.

When first asked what the interviewed students thought about electric scooters, a third of them described them as “cool” and it’s easy to see why. They seem to signify a silent, but significant point of engineering and personal transportation progress.

The future has arrived and it’s not in the form of a boring mixer or same old lightbulb. Electric scooters are reliable, easy to charge, and a great way to get around Fresno State’s big campus. That last point being the main reason students buy one.

About a third of the students interviewed who don’t have an electric scooter would love to buy one, but are scared by the prices ranging anywhere from around $300 to $800. It’s a costly investment that many students don’t have money for, so when asked if Fresno State should have a rent program for them, more than half of the students interviewed thought it would be a great idea.

On the flipside, there are some students who get “nervous” by electric scooters. Their presence is marked by fast, reckless driving, mostly by drivers without helmets. More than half of the students interviewed would love the idea of implementing lanes for all electric vehicles, as well as bikes and skateboards.

Though this is a great idea, a lot of students brought up their hesitation that lanes would not be “feasible” because of the complexity and cost of its implementation. Even though there are students, when asked if they have seen or been in an accident, many reported they have not, but they say they have seen many people fall off their electric scooters.

A curious observation made from the interviews is that despite some students who think electric scooters are a nuisance and danger to campus, others hail them as a part of the future.

About a third of the students interviewed still prefer their own two legs to get around campus.

Meet the Writer
Valentino Di Pietro Hernandez is a senior college student majoring in English creative writing at Fresno State. Born in San Diego but raised in Switzerland, he brings an uniquely European and personal view to his, at times, comma-infested messy writing. Lucid indifference and the nagging critique of everything and everyone, combined with a charming and absurd personality makes him the one thing all writers should be: weird.

MAGKAISA

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Friendship Games! Seeing so many themes and hearing the chants was so exciting and overall the atmosphere was so amazing,” Herrera said.

The other aspect of the event was the dance performance, Roll Call, where schools perform a short choreographed routine that showcases each school and gives them the opportunity to shout out who they are.

Herrera spoke with great enthusiasm and felt great pride when performing.

“It was nice to see everyone excited to dance. In reality, we were very nervous to see how the audience would react to our performance, but we felt very appreciative when we saw how excited they were to see us perform,” Herrera said.

“The importance of it was obviously how we were going to represent ourselves, but at the end the highlight was the audience reaction.”

Although the game portion of the day was cut short, Herrera still expressed the significance of the annual event.

“We don’t get many opportunities to be around the Filipino community, and knowing that we exist to each other is important,” he said.

The organization was established in 1974, and the term “magkaisa” is the Tagalog translation for unite.

Herrera has been in the club since he was a freshman on campus.

“I feel like what makes MGK special is the concept of bringing everyone of different backgrounds together. I know we are under the pretext of being a Filipino club, but what I learned since being a part of MGK is the significance of finding a community while going through not only college, but life in general,” Herrera said.

“As president this year, I hope to continue this environment for my members and community.”